

# Randy Williams

*Jenks, OK*



I'm fully engrossed in contributing to solving the literacy issues we have in this country. James Baldwin said it best, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." I am in this fight because of the sheer impact of even one student connecting with a book can have on their lives. The research is clear that the quality of a student's reading life goes beyond success in an English class - it sets them up for a lifetime of success on several indicators. I am constantly advocating, collaborating with colleagues, and innovating in my classroom/school to grow the students at my school as readers and to increase the reading culture at my school and, ultimately, in Oklahoma. In a state that has traditionally underfunded education and has one of the highest incarceration rates in the country, this work is critical for a state that desperately needs to see the impact books can have on setting kids and communities up for success.

The Book Love Foundation grant has helped provide much-needed access to books for the benefit of kids at my school by expanding their access to help put them on a path to success. Having the right book for the right kid is key, and having a classroom library with engaging texts is priceless. Organizations such as this and educational leaders like Penny Kittle have provided tools to help me shape and grow readers and set students up for success long after leaving my class. I am forever grateful and appreciative of Penny Kittle and the leadership and model she provides and the Book Love Foundation for offering the resources to supplement my library with new titles that continue to engage students.

"Mr. Williams is unique in that he allows students to experiment with choice, to experiment with freedom in a way that ensures they have the ability to explore and discover the genres, the authors, the style, and overall, the reason they love reading whether or not they knew it in the first place." K.R. Jenks Senior 2020